

**Town Meeting Coordinating Committee
Minutes for Wednesday, December 12, 2012,
3:00 – 5:30 pm
Diana Romer Room, Town Hall**

Present: Peggy Roberts, Mary Streeter, Melissa Perot, Patricia Holland, Alan Powell, Nonny Burack, Carol Gray.

Peggy called the meeting to order at 3:12 PM.

Bus Tour: Mary shared the 26 evaluations, which she will type up. The vast majority of evaluations said that they found the bus tour to be helpful. Many complained about background noise. Alan said the bus driver told him that in the future we should request a bus with a sound system built in. Mary recommended that next time we collect the material to be passed out earlier so we can check it for errors. Pat reported she received the bill for the bus from the School Department and handed it in to the Town Manager's office today; Deborah Roussel said she would tell the School Department to bill the office directly.

Precinct Meetings: We discussed ways to improve attendance perhaps by phoning TM members about meeting dates, asking if the person has particular concerns about the warrant, if answer is don't know, suggesting they read the warrant and call back.

Discussion of Town Meeting: We discussed the points raised by the Select Board about the Fall TM as expressed in Stephanie O'Keeffe's letter to Peggy.

- On TM starting time, 7 PM was supported by 34 in our questionnaire, 7:30 PM by 16. Melissa noted TM members would still need reminding about that time.
- On a consent calendar, discussion revealed various difficulties with it including an early formal notification about its use.
- On check-in delays, we thought it was a combination of the new procedure (names now filed by precinct, confusion over tally cards), members talking, tellers' unfamiliarity with the members, but that the delays were negligible.
- On the new tally card system, we saw no problems and valued the saving of paper.
- On making the deadline earlier for petitioners submitting zoning articles, we agreed that would be unfair to petitioners. Instead, Carol moved that the deadline for the Planning Board to submit zoning articles match the date for petitioners' submission; the motion was approved unanimously. Carol also moved that the date for submitting zoning articles be set earlier; that motion was also approved unanimously. Mary suggested having a public hearing before the warrant is signed. Peggy and Mary suggested we invite members of the Select Board and Planning Board to discuss changes. Melissa noted the difficulty of having last-minute meetings about an article with the Town Manager. We also agreed to recommend that a member of TMCC be included in a meeting with the Town Manager, the chair of the Select Board, and the Town Manager's assistant.

Peggy also felt strongly that the Select Board should not hold meetings right before Town Meeting, at least not on issues coming up at TM because the public would find it difficult to attend them. Another suggestion was that the SB meet in the auditorium and the meeting be televised as it usually is. Peggy will submit a draft of TMCC's responses to the Select Board to be reviewed at our next meeting. One concern raised was about the Select Board making recommendations before the night on which the article would be voted at Town Meeting.

Survey Responses, Support for Dependent Care, and TMCC Budget: Mary reported that 7 TM members supported being reimbursed for dependent care expenses, and that 2 people said they knew of people who decided not to run for TM because of those expenses. We agreed that we should ask the Town Manager to allow \$2500 for such expenses in FY14. We thought that \$400 for TMCC costs, which would be separate from the line item for dependent care.

Update on Auditorium Audio Improvements: We agreed the audio quality was extremely poor in TM. Efforts to reach Kris Pacunas have been unsuccessful. Nonny was told by Amherst Media that they had many difficulties with equipment.

Planning Ahead:

The forum on greening Amherst will take place Jan. 29th from 7 PM to 9:30. We will devise an ad for Amherst Media.

Nonny agreed to send post cards in January to TM members whose terms expire in 2013 to remind them of that expiration in case they want to be on the ballot for another term.

The Town Election will be on April 9, 2013.

We will have the Warrant Review on Tuesday, April 23rd, and precinct meetings April 25-May 2. Town Meeting will begin May 6.

TMCC Website /Listserv Material: Not discussed.

Scheduling of Meetings: We will meet Wednesday, January 2, 2013, at 3 PM.

Minutes: We approved as amended the minutes of the meetings of November 2nd and 16th.

Submitted by Patricia Holland, Clerk

Approved on February 6, 2013

Documents Distributed:

Agenda

Minutes of the meetings of November 2nd and 16th

Evaluation of Warrant Review 11/18/12

Draft of Peggy Roberts' TMCC Update